I Shall Never Return
1
Kazuna Uchida
Deux
EXPLICIT CONTENT

I Shall Never Return

1

Kazuna Uchida

act one 2

act two 50

act three 140

Act One

THE SUMMER HE WAS THIRTEEN
KEN'S PARENTS GOT DIVORCED.
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW ..
YOU'VE GOT ME!
.. TO CONSOLE HIM.

Mmm
TWEET
TWEET
RUMFL
Ritsuro?
KEN?

I don't have to worry about that.
Yikes!
It's after seven! The end-of-term assembly!
You're the one that came barging over!
What am I doing here?!
Drop-out!!
SLAM!
Hmph.
FLICK
Ken, honey?

Now I remember!
I went to beat him up...
...but then Ken.
POW
Huh? Try!
Ouch! It hurts!
He really punched me!
Food.
I can't believe I passed out! And then spent the night! I'm such a loser!

That's not funny!
My glasses?!
You better buy me a new pair!
Just wash them!
Where're your glasses?
Nami! Those're my chopsticks!
It's all ready, so hurry up and eat
Ooh, you were out all night!
You think I've got germs?!
That's disgusting!
Enough with the germaphobe act! Mommmm!
Nami, you too!
You're paying me back for those!
No way!
Ritsuro!
We've got disposable chopsticks. Just finish eating!
Sheesh
Up until middle school he was stuffing his dirty underwear into his drawers
Did you see that glare?
I'm going
THUD
Yeah!
FOUR YEARS LATER...
That's gross!
I do like this neat phase better but still!

Is that cut because of me? Did you get into a fight yesterday after...
No
But Ken and I
Moeko
GLARE
I'M SUCH A LOSER. .
You're not the first girl he's slept with
KRNCH

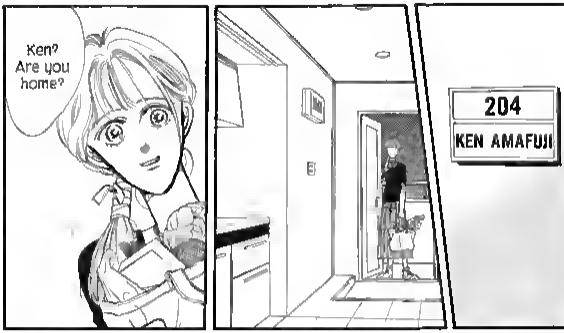
This makes you the fourth girlfriend of mine he's made a move on
You didn't have to tell me that. He seemed so experienced...
What's *that* supposed to mean?!
That's not what I meant ..
You mean Ken only came onto me because I'm your girlfriend?
Did you fall for Ken or something?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "I'M SORRY"?! MY EGO WAS CRUSHED, THANKS TO YOU!
I'm sorry
You're the one who asked *me* out, remember?!
SHOVE

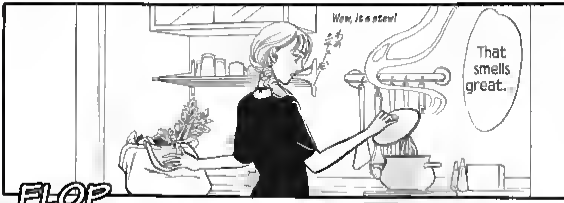
We've been going out for a year!
Not when we went to Mt Tenbo, or that time I told you my parents were away.
But still you never tried to make a move on me!
You're just like one of my friends!
I really wanted you to make love to me
Moeko

GRIP
Damn it!
SPLASH
SPLISH
SPLASH
Ritsuro ...
I can't be with a girl who cheated on me!
KEN, YOU MORON!

Lady
Will you be gentle?
Of course!
Mm...
CREAK

Is this his room or his laundry basket?
DIZZY
IF YOU'RE OUT, THE LEAST YOU COULD DO IS LOCK THE DOOR.
CLATTER
THE LIGHTS AREN'T EVEN ON...
Ken! I forgot something!
I'm coming in!
TOSS
TOSS
Where are they?
I HAVE TO FIND THEM BEFORE I START TO FEEL SICK.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
My glasses...
Huh?
SNAP
!
THUD
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!!


Ken? Are you home?
204
KEN AMAFUJI


Wow, it's stew!
That smells great.

FLOP
Ritsuro
Laundry
COIN LAUNDRY
What IS this?
It's Ken's.
Moeko?
The kitchen's spotless! Who'd ever think a guy lived here?!
SQUEAK SQUEAK
COIN LAUNDRY

SCRUB
GRIP
The way you've thrown out me...?
COIN LAUNDRY
I threw out the garbage too.
Why would you do his laundry?! I thought you two had a fight.
SPLASH
Laundry!
SCRUB SCRUB
Ken...
COIN LAUNDRY
Ken!
My glasses!
Do they make me look smarter?

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Kazuna Uchida
Deux
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Ken?!
Man, I'm beat
That money! Did you...
He reeks of perfume.
Business meets pleasure.
Are you a complete moron?!
CLENCH
You gonna hit me again?!
As much as it takes!
Stop, both of you!
Ritsuro...
Is it my job you don't like?
Or are you mad because I slept with someone else?

Wha...
I can't deal with this anymore.
Your job is disgusting!
Being an escort?
Wait, Ritsuro
I'm through with you!!
GRAB
Moeko
Let me go!

Stay with me...
Don't leave
I need someone...
He's so dirty!
It was a big shock to him when his parents got divorced.
I can't deal with him anymore!
And his mother took it hard
His father was having an affair

NOBODY WANTS ME!
SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE CARE OF YOU, BUT SHE LEFT.
Is that how you really feel?
Moeko?
SHOVE
You just need *someone*?!
Don't treat me like an idiot!

SLAM
Everyone can just go to hell!!
HURL

YOSHINARI
...
He was standing alone in front of LOFT
When I said hi, he asked me to have tea with him
We just sat there, talking on and off...
And then I found out why Ken was living on his own.
DISTRICT 6 PARK
SQUEAK
I understood how he felt when he dropped out of high school
SQUEAK

SQUEAK
Seeing how close he was to going over the edge...
You didn't know how to console him.
But then.
SQUEAK
You felt pity for him huh?
Ken was like a baby clamoring for attention and you couldn't turn him away. Isn't that what happened?
Ritsuro
SQUEAK
I'm

Moeko...
Let's go see the fireworks this weekend
Pity...
I'm sorry...
I'm.
I'm so sorry, Ritsuro...
IT WAS ALL OUT OF PITY.
KEN...

BOOM
Rit-suro
PANT PANT
A DREAM...?

Hey...
My parents are away tonight..

Moeko
Itsuro...?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?!

I'm going home now
But why? I—
I can't—
I
It's not that I hate you or anything
That's not fair!
Look me in the eye and say that!
MOEKO...
It wasn't easy for me to make up my mind about this, you know! But I did.—
Because I care about you Ritsuro.

MY FEELINGS...?
MO.
It's your fault for not being able to lie about your feelings!
SLAP!!
KEN...
CREAK
Hm?

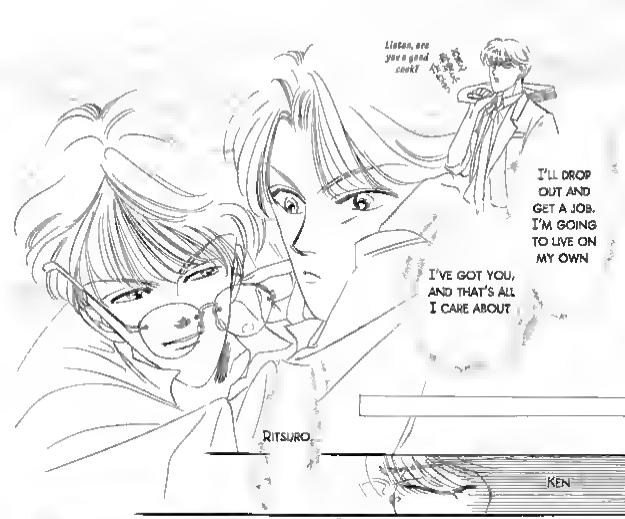
Hold it
That you Ritsuro?
!
THAT'S THE STEW I MADE!
So why'd you come then?! To do more cleaning?! Maybe some laundry?!
Ritsuro!!
I was just trying to be nice! I don't have anything to say to you if you're gonna be like that!
Let go of me!
Will you just listen to me?!

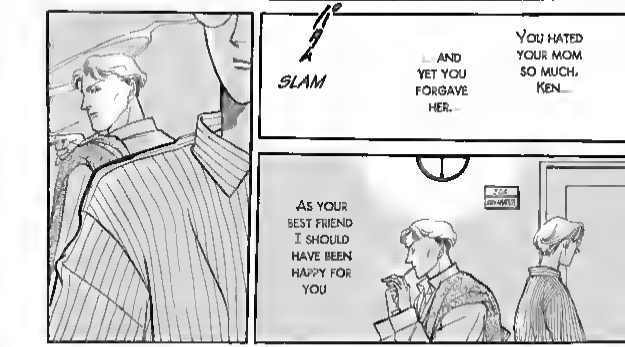
My mother's getting remarried
And I'm going to live with her...
I'm leaving just like you wanted!
KEN?!
It's over, Ritsuro!!
WHEN I'M WITH YOU
I FEEL DIRTY...

MY CHEST ACHES...
What is it, Ritsuro?
Hurry up and eat
I put your share on a separate plate
It's such a pain! We have to wash more dishes!
Yeah
We're all family. I can't believe you won't eat off the same plate.
I forgot to mention, Ken's mother called earlier
It had been awhile!
She's getting remarried
Ritsuro?
THUMP
Ritsuro!!

If you can't shoot the general, shoot the horse.
You told her you couldn't go? You sure? You're gonna get dumped again!
It's because you sleep with my girlfriends!
Sorry, Moeko
You dumbass. They all wanted me!
You can hit me if you want.
That just proves that you were never really into having a serious relationship with a woman
Besides, ... for a guy who gets his girlfriends stolen all the time, you sure don't learn
Wait, Ken!
Go to hell!
Stay away from Moeko.
Hmph

SLAM!
Ken?!
AMAFUJI
SHOCK
I TOLD YOU NOT TO BRING MEN HERE!
YOU WHORE!
Ken ...!?
YELLING AT HER WOULDN'T HELP ANYTHING. WITHOUT SOMEONE TO HOLD HIM TOGETHER, HE WAS GOING TO FALL APART.
MORE THAN ANGER, IT WAS A FEAR OF BEING LEFT ALONE.


Listen, are you a good cook?
I'LL DROP OUT AND GET A JOB. I'M GOING TO LIVE ON MY OWN
I'VE GOT YOU, AND THAT'S ALL I CARE ABOUT
RITSURO
KEN


SLAM
...AND YET YOU FORGAVE HER.
YOU HATED YOUR MOM SO MUCH, KEN...
AS YOUR BEST FRIEND I SHOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY FOR YOU

HUH?
NOT HERE?
Ken? It's me
I gotta talk to you
He just takes stuff off and throws it on the floor
?
Ken!
What happened?!
SNAP
WAS IT THAT GUY I JUST SAW?!

That asshole! All he cared about was his own pleasure! Damn it!
Aah!
KEN?!
Are you still..?
Ritsuro
What're you..?
FLOP
Ritsuro... you know how I feel about you, don't you?
In that case...
Ken...
ahh

How...
How long are you gonna keep doing this?! Huh?!
I CAN'T!!
SHOVE
Are you lonely? You should talk to people. You don't even try to live a better life!
When something doesn't go your way... you'll just take anyone! You're out of control! You're so dirty!
It's to get back at
Ken!
You don't need to do that anymore, right?!
Aren't you going to live with her?! Didn't you forgive her?!
It's to get back at my "mom" for abandoning me

That's what a *mother* does, right?!
Cleaning up after me making me dinner...
Who asked you to be my mother?
I'm sick of your pity and your interfering!
HE'S TALKING ABOUT ME?!
Go home!
Go on back to Moeko, why don't you?!

"Get back" at me?
You always have to be the victim, don't you?!
Stop being such a goddamned baby!
Rit-su...
RIING
RIING
RIING
RIING
RIING
Ken, honey? It's Mom.
Are you listening?

Ken, honey? Ken, honey?
HEH HEH
A "baby"?
. to Singapore
I know it's sudden so I understand if you're a little confused. But I'd love it if you came with us...
Did you consider what we talked about?
HEH HEH HEH
THE WAY I FELT BACK THEN...
What the *hell* was that about?
FIRST IT WAS FRIENDSHIP.
HEH HEH
Hello?
AND THEN, I GUESS, PITY.
AND NOW IT'S SOMETHING DIRTY...
BECAUSE I CAN'T LIE TO MYSELF...

Ken
THE MORE I THINK OF HIM...

About Singapore, I'll...
Ken honey?
CLICK
Ritsuro ...?

Don't turn around!
Why'd you come back?
I'm not really sure myself
I JUST...
But you're trembling...
Rit-su.
...ro...
...COULDN'T LET IT END LIKE THIS!

I NEED TO BE HERE.
Ritsuro
I want to be with you.
Rit-su...
YOU NEED ME.
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING

I'm scared
I'm sor—
mm
No, don't stop.
I slept with Moeko.
Are you mad because I slept with someone else?
I'm getting back at
Even though I tried to void it...
And even though I thought that it was dirty and twisted...
I was the only one you depended on, and it scared me that you felt so strongly.

ALL I REALLY WANTED TO DO WAS RETURN THOSE FEELINGS
You
Don't need
to get back at me anymore.
Not anymore

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE FOR ME...
Ritsuro
RIING
RIING
Even though I knew it was just friendship
I knew you were the only one for me.
Something about Moeko reminded me of you
I don't care about Moeko anymore!

I WON'T LIE TO MYSELF ANYMORE.
Ritsuro
ZOOOM
The morning you and I fought
my mom cried and apologized for everything

rline
Are you?
There it goes...
Are you really OK with this? Singapore's pretty far away
For some reason it made me happy.
Huh? I can't hear you
Hey Ken
THIS SUMMER I WON'T CALL YOU MY "BEST FRIEND"—
—ANY MORE.
WHOOSH
JAL
JAL

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Kazuna Uchida
Deux
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Act Two

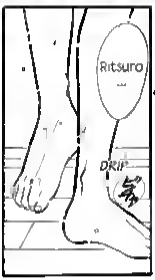
"I LOVE YOU."
"I CARE ABOUT YOU."
WORDS WERE ALWAYS POWERLESS.

IS THIS "FRIENDSHIP"?
OR IS IT "LOVE"?
THE BORDERLINE IS ALWAYS AMBIGUOUS.

MY HEART TREMBLES...
...DEEP INSIDE...

...EVERY TIME I FEEL YOUR BODY HEAT.

We met in junior high and applied to the same high school. For a while, we wore the same uniform.
I had a girlfriend named Moeko and was just trying to be a normal 17-year-old guy.
Meanwhile, Ken's [illegible] walked out on him, and he dropped out of high school. He lived alone and had a sketchy job.



TWIST

Yeah

He was about to self-destruct. Ready to crumble any second. The thing that made me hold onto him.

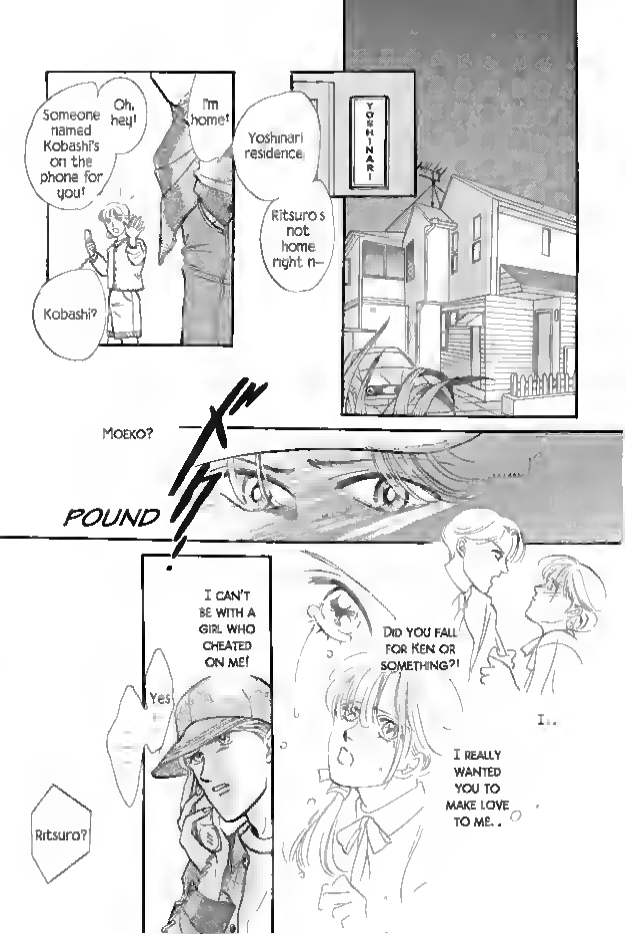
—Wasn't friendship or pity

SPLASH
Ack!
TWIST
It can wait until after our "shower."
Seriously, come on! Dinner's ready
SPLASH
Why do you always *always* do this?
I'm just being true to myself
SPLASH
You get me all worked up, Ritsuro.
SPLASH
KEN...

SPLASH
Ritsuro ...
Ken ...?
GRIP

D– Don't. I–
I don't like doing it this way
It's too late now...
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
Look how late it is!
I'm borrowing your work shirt and your jeans.
My stuff is soaked!!

Hey
...how about another round?
And don't you have something similar?
I've got work at 6 am moron
Just stay over it's spring break.
BLEEEEAH!
Are you...
an.
..idiot?
KEN...
You better heat up that food and eat it!
I'll be back tomorrow
OK
Ar-Hi-chan!

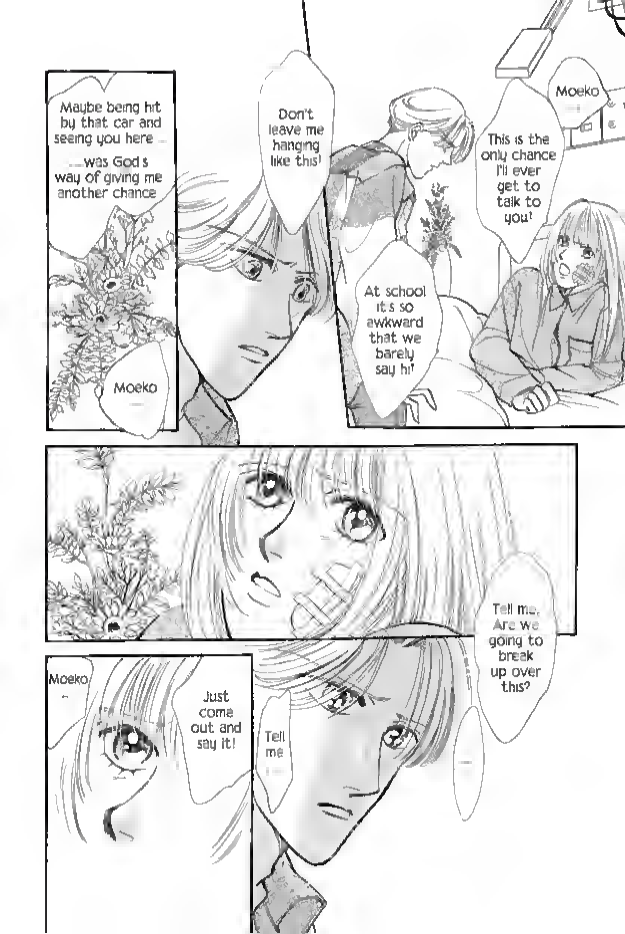

Someone named Kobashi's on the phone for you!
Oh, hey!
I'm home!
Kobashi?
Yoshinari residence.
Ritsuro's not home right n–
YOSHINARI
MOEKO?
POUND
I CAN'T BE WITH A GIRL WHO CHEATED ON ME!
Yes.
Ritsuro?
DID YOU FALL FOR KEN OR SOMETHING?!
I..
I REALLY WANTED YOU TO MAKE LOVE TO ME..

My daughter
was in a car accident.
Ritsuro Yoshinari?
This is Moeko Kobashi's mother
WHAT?!
Moeko?!

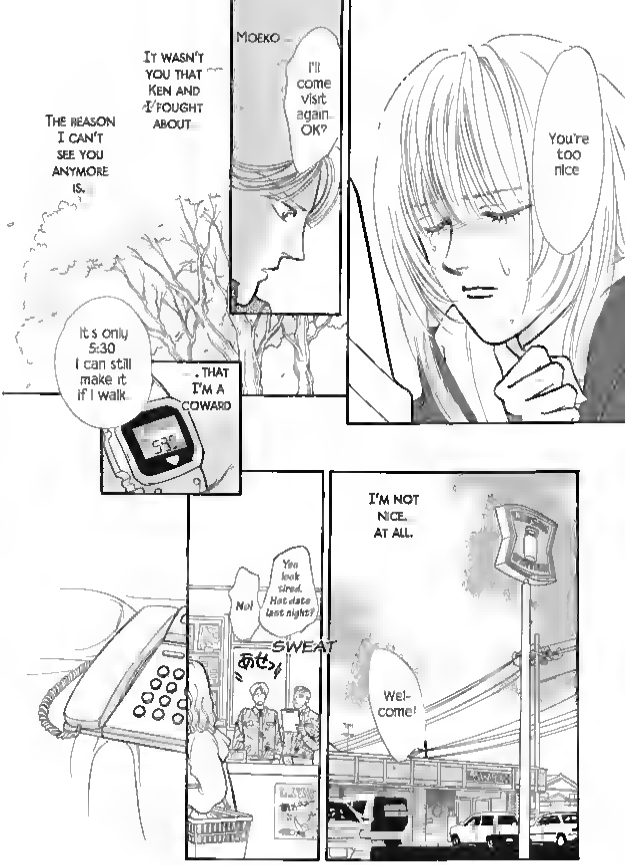
SLAM
Moeko ...!
PANT PANT
Are you OK?!
PANT PANT
PANT
Uh
How smart.
B-DMP

Hi this is Ken. Can I speak to Ritsuro?
Moeko was in an accident?
Yeah so my big brother
...went to sit with her tonight
He forgot his glasses again
That dumbass
Hello? Hello? Ken?
KLICK

This is a first. Waking up and seeing you next to me...
You came to see me
Moeko?
THUMP
Are you in pain? They said you broke your right leg
You shouldn't sit up then. Go back to sleep
I don't wanna!
It's killing me


Maybe being hit by that car and seeing you here ... ...was God's way of giving me another chance
Moeko
Don't leave me hanging like this!
At school it's so awkward that we barely say hi!
Moeko
This is the only chance I'll ever get to talk to you!
Tell me. Are we going to break up over this?
Moeko
Just come out and say it!
Tell me

I...
Then why are you avoiding me?
But I don't.
That you hate me! That you despise me for sleeping with your best friend? Than I could...
I...
Moeko...
I'm so sorry! I'm the one who cheated on you!
Please stop blaming yourself
You dummy


MOEKO
I'll come visit again. OK?
You're too nice
IT WASN'T YOU THAT KEN AND I FOUGHT ABOUT
THE REASON I CAN'T SEE YOU ANYMORE IS...
It's only 5:30 I can still make it if I walk
...THAT I'M A COWARD
I'M NOT NICE. AT ALL.
You look tired. Had date last night?
No!
SWEAT
あせっ
Wel-come!

Ristorante Italiano
ELMA
I WORK THE EARLY SHIFT AT A CONVENIENCE STORE.
Ritsuro...
...you can clock out.
I'm totally out of it!
Yawn
LUNCH TIME IS BUSY AT THE RESTAURANT.
Now you're off to that Italian place, right? Pull yourself together!
I'VE BEEN UP ALL NIGHT, AND I'M STARTING TO FEEL IT.
Ritsuro
TWEET TWEET
TWITTER TWEET

Any trash or cigarette butts that I can throw out for you?
Fill 'er up with regular!
Coming right up!
Get this one too
Sure thing
You got a girl-friend, sugar?
Excuse me ?
With a face like that, you could have anyone you want
How about later, huh?
Ya-hoo!
Hey, kid!
I'd love to see you all spruced up ♡

You can't dis my woman like that!
Ken?!
What's going on?
It's a fight!
Come here you!
Let go!
YANK
Huh?!
Don't worry. She's not my type
Too much makeup
Get your greasy hands off my woman!
Whatever, just stop bothering the other customers!
You little brat!
RUSTLE

Ken, it's me.
BEEP
I'm not here right now. Please leave a message after the beep.
I'm gonna be late tonight.
PUSH
204
KEN AMAFUJI
You're TOO NICE.
Moeko Kobashi
I Moeko. .
Ritsuro?
KNOCK KNOCK
I've been waiting! I was about to give up on you!
THUMP

You dummy, what're you talking about?
But who cares? I get to see you all the time *here*!
That's great.
See? I got crutches.
They said I'll be out of the hospital before the next term starts.
MOEKO...
I'm just ...
... so happy that you're with m...
IF ONLY I COULD HOLD YOU...
Sorry
Did you get my message?

Let's go
He smells like booze!
Ken?!
Go where?
Give me a break
I didn't get any sleep last night!
I don't want any!
How's Moeko?
I'm going home!
I don't want to be here!

KEN...
I can't just ditch her!
You spend so much time with her, so she must be pretty bad
OOH!
Ken!
Is it really you, Ken?!
You guys getting back together?
She might have ideas you know.
AN OLD FRIEND OF KEN'S?
Long time no see!
Wait, aren't you gonna introduce me to them?
I'll be here...
STEAM
...all night.
TOSS

WHY DO YOU STILL HANG OUT WITH THOSE PEOPLE?
HE'S JEALOUS AND "GETTING BACK AT ME AGAIN"
Ken
I CAN'T TAKE THAT KIND OF PAIN
You're not going back to that are you?
NOT AGAIN
It's so pretty— the color of a clear, calm ocean.
YOU'RE LIKE A TROPICAL FISH SWIMMING IN THAT OCEAN.
SWAYING SHIMMERING FLOATING BACK AND FORTH.

HUH..?!
KOFF KOFF
けほ けほ
Yuck!
...This is nasty! Peppermint!
!
SLURP
ムグ
No one.
No one can catch you
Is he still seeing that geezer?
Who the hell are you?
How 'bout it?
You seem to be pretty buzzed. It's really sexy.
What do you say we take off just you and.
Back off, man!
SLAM!
You've taken my money before Ken.
As if you didn't know slut!

You said you weren't gonna do that stuff anymore!
What do you mean stupid?!
What a stupid thing to get jealous over
Ken! Who was that guy?!
Ritsuro!
Ken...
Goddamn it!
Don't you trust me?
That's not it. I just...
Don't you love me?
Are you...
HUH?
You're drunk!
I'm asking if you love me!
OUT HERE ON THE STREET?!

No way!
People will...
You're the sober one here! Answer me!
I love you
Say it again
I love you!
Again.
SRUSH
YOU RE MY TROPICAL FISH
I'VE GOT TO CATCH YOU

KEN..
Mm
..KEN...
uhhh
PANT.
PANT
PANT

I TRUST YOU
Ritsuro ~?
BRUSH
I WON'T LET ANYONE ELSE HAVE YOU
You were really into it tonight
I WON'T THINK YOU'RE DIRTY!
Ken?!
Maybe that'd be best.
Ken ~
You gonna screw her like you screw me?
What about Moeko?
Huh?

What're you talking about?
No one could say you're anything but a "normal" 17-year-old guy.
And if you get her back you'll have a cute girlfriend too.
You go to school and have a normal job.
Ken?
You got parents and a little sister and a house.
Moeko and I aren't gonna...
You're *normal*.
You saw them, right? Those guys in the club? That pervert who hit on me? That's just the beginning!
Controlled by my jealousy... caught up in the fast life and never thinking about the future!
Ken...?
I know it's pointless to regret it... ...but I keep getting stuck in the same old shit!

Ritsuro
KEN?!
This guy you just slept with here... he's disgusting!
It's disgusting! And that's *normal* for me!
I used to sell myself.
I'd do whatever anyone wanted for money
!!
SLAP
What is this?
Why are you so hard on yourself?!
You're just too honest with yourself
You were just... a little weak that's all...
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
THAT'S WHY YOU NEEDED ME, RIGHT?
You're not disgusting!

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Kazuna Uchida
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EXPLICIT CONTENT

I REMEMBER.
...THAT TIME I HELD YOU LIKE THIS
THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING
Do I look the type?
So what's all this money for? Need money to take your girl out?
I just want to be doing something.
Good work.
PAY
Thanks
Well then I'm done for the day
Oh Ritsuro!

I'll take it gladly.
Although I'd be totally lying if I told you that it wasn't for the money...
I don't want to go easy on myself
IS IT GUILT?
DIZZY
What a good kid!
SOB
I'M SUCH A LIAR
I DON'T WANT TO GO EASY ON MYSELF ...?
What's the matter?
Ritsuro?!
TREMBLE
You can't go to the restaurant like this
I'll give them a call.
Excuse me. I haven't slept much these past few days

I THINK A PART OF ME...
...WAS STILL TRYING TO BE "NORMAL."
I WANT TO SEE KEN RIGHT NOW!
Ken Amafuji? He doesn't work here anymore
I want to see him
Yesterday he got fired for punching a customer.

Ritsuro?
Who's Ritsuro?
Huh?
JOLT
You don't remember my name? That's cold man
I'm in the area I'll swing by and get you
Never mind
Can I take you out to dinner as an apology for yesterday?
That voice...
You've gotta be
RITSURO!
DING-DONG

You're home early, Ritsu
Ritsuro...
K-KLIK
Wait, don't hang up!
DING-DONG
Sorry someone's at the door I'm hanging up.
HEH HEH
SLAM
Ritsuro isn't a client! He's my...
Your what?
See, I knew you couldn't stop
You're really something, Ken. Taking cash from a kid like that...
Oh, right. Ritsuro's the guy you had yesterday
How'd you know where

Go home, you bastard!
It doesn't matter! I want another go with y–
Get out!
I'm not asking for a *freebie*. How much do you want?
This isn't like you
GLARE
Don't think you can buy me!
You can pretend to be normal all you want, but you'll always be *you*
Hey now
Don't get violent
CLATTER

Shall I remind you how it feels?
Say another word... ...and I'll kill you!
I'd like to see you try!
SHATTER
Ken
HEH HEH
How many men have you slept with? How many women?
How many guys have you let in without even asking their names?
You'll never change. You'll never stop.

HE'S NOT HONEST AT ALL!
WHY... WHY DIDN'T HE TELL ME LAST NIGHT?
Don't get so serious!
Take back what you said! Take it back!
HE NAGS AND NAGS, BUT HE DOESN'T TELL ME WHAT I NEED TO HEAR!
SCRAPE
Chill! Calm down!
Apolo-
STAB

WHACK
Huh?
わあああ
Ahh!
Ritsuro!
Ken?!

Hey there! Move away from the patient!
Why?
He'll be fine. The wound isn't deep.
Ken! Hang in there!
Why did he do this to you?
SURGERY
SLAM
Was he pissed about getting blown off? Was it harassment?
That guy... who was at the club the other night!
POUND
POUND
POUND
It's disgusting! And that's normal for me!
You moron!!

RUSTLE
FLUTTER
FLUTTER

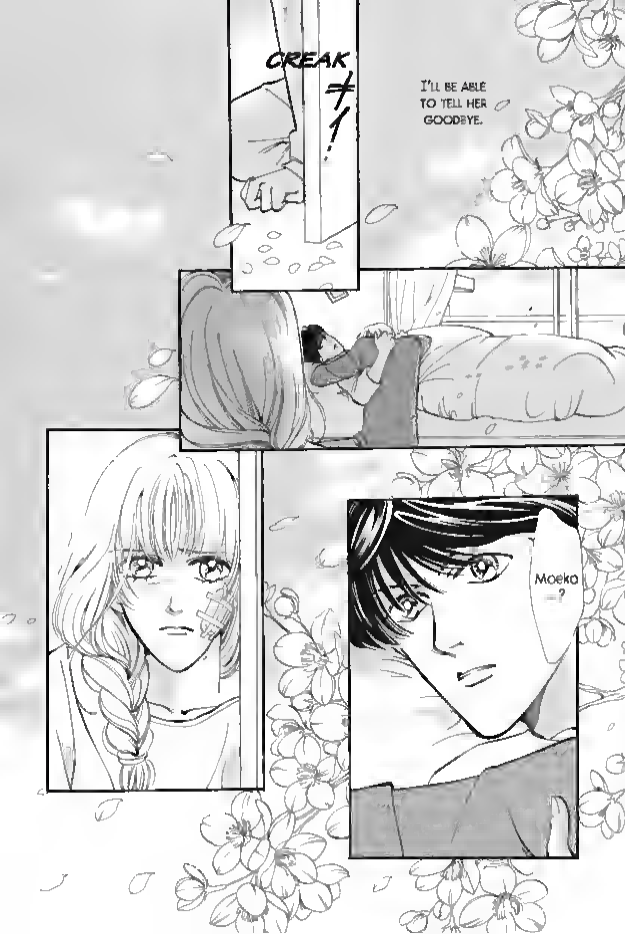
You know that boyfriend of yours who came to visit the other day?
Miss Kobashi
KNOCK KNOCK
Miss Kobashi your breakfast
Come in!
I may have been mistaken...
...but I think he came in with an emergency case last night.
I think the patient's name was Amafuji.
I KNOW EXACTLY...
...WHO IS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME.
I'M NOT NICE AT ALL...

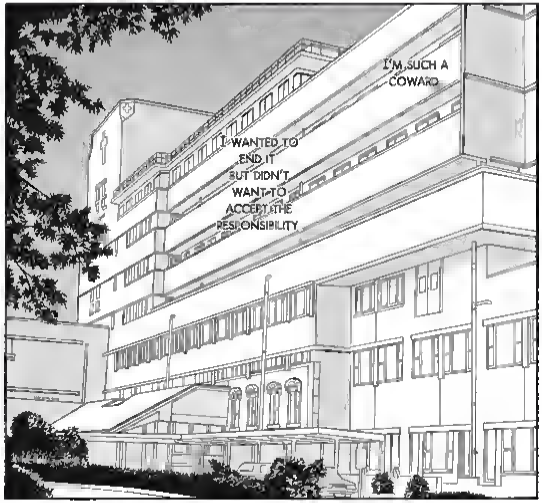
Ritsuro...
I can't believe you're crying.
Hey...
I was so worried...
...so worried that I...
I KNEW, BUT I RAN AWAY FROM IT.
Ritsuro...

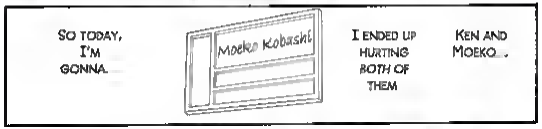
I KNEW, BUT PRETENDED I DIDN'T.
I'M NOT EVEN CLOSE TO NICE.
Moeko.
I need to tell—
I don't want to leave her hanging on
IT WOULD BE SO MUCH EASIER IF SHE WAS RIGHT, AND I COULD FIX THINGS.
INTENSIVE CARE
—JUST BY SAYING I HATE HER.
Ritsuro
BUT—
—I do like her So I have to.
—tell her straight out

"I've chosen Ken."
You're the only one for me too
For once... you're being honest.
Rit-suro?!
ZZZZ
THUD

AS LONG AS YOU SAY THAT—
THAT ONE WORD THAT'S ALL I WANTED TO HEAR.


CREAK
I'LL BE ABLE TO TELL HER GOODBYE.
Moeka —?


I'M SUCH A COWARD
I WANTED TO END IT BUT DIDN'T WANT TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY


SO TODAY, I'M GONNA...
Moeko Kobashi
I ENDED UP HURTING BOTH OF THEM
KEN AND MOEKO...

Miss Kobashi just checked out

See for yourself. I don't know why, but she insisted. Her mother was very worried.
No way...
MOEKO?!
MOEKO?!
RUSTLE
I HAVE TO TELL HER, FACE TO FACE.
I WAS...
...PLANNING TO TELL HER WHY I BROKE UP WITH HER.

Uh... yeah but she just went to sleep
It's... Ritsuro I heard that Moeko got out of the hospital?
Yes?
KOBASHI
Oh, OK. Thanks anyway
CLICK
Moeko... will you tell me what happened?
CLACK
CLACK
I really am going to rest now Take any phone calls for me, OK?
CLACK
Moeko ...
It's got nothing to do with you, Mom
My *feelings* are the problem

SHUT
I'VE CHOSEN KEN
I'LL TELL MOEKO
I can't be this naive!
I can't believe I'm crying

That's great. Now you don't have to tell Moeko
Ken Amafuji
I knew it!
You told her, didn't you?!
Dumb-ass.
FLOP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
Dummy!

Besides, you couldn't break up with her with drool on your cheek right?
I was watching you sleep
Oh, man! Why didn't you wake me up?!
She saw us the other day
BUT STILL, KEN...
I can finally say sayonara to the smell of disinfectant!
Let's go
Ken Amatoji
Cook me some rice...
Wanna get something to eat?
THANK GOD YOU WEREN'T SERIOUSLY INJURED

Let's toast to you getting out of the hospital!
This is fancy. Bet it took your whole paycheck.
CHOMP
This is great!
Really?
Damn.
Wait until we're done eating.

WE STILL HAVE SO MANY PROBLEMS.
YOU SAID IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHY THAT GUY STABBED YOU...
...AND WE DON'T KNOW WHEN HE MIGHT COME BACK.
AND THEN... THERE'S HOEKO...
KOFF-HACK GAG CHOKE
けけほっ
けほっ
けほっ
Don't push yourself
Ritsuro
I'm fine.
Ritsuro?
The new semester's starting soon

I JUST WANT TO BE CLOSER TO YOU.
Give that back!
It doesn't suit you anyway
EVEN JUST THE TINIEST BIT CLOSER.
Hey Ken
Hm?

Yeah
You gotta look for a new job
I BELIEVE IN YOU.
ROOM ASSIGNMENTS
SENIOR CLASS
ROOM ASSIGNMENTS
SENIOR CLASS

YOSHINARI RITSUKO
SENIOR ROOM ASSI
KOBAYASHI MOEKO
JOLT
Omigod!
Moeko what happened?!
You took the plunge with that haircut!

Hah hah!
I actually like it, you know
MOEKO?!
Good morning Ritsuro
SPIN
YOUR HAIR.
I see we're in the same class.
This is the third year in a row.
We'll have a great time.
SMILE

NOW WE'LL BE IN THE SAME CLASS FOR ANOTHER YEAR.
Nice to meet you all.
SENIOR CLASS 7
And hi to everyone I've met before
I THOUGHT FOR SURE SHE'D BE ALL BROKEN UP.
THIS IS KIND OF A SHOCK.
Moeko
SPIN
I'm Hiroto Yumioka I teach Japanese History and I'll be your homeroom teacher.
Ha ha ha!
N... no I'm single.
You can't ask that! Moron!
Is your wife hot?
I'm 28, and my hobby is freshwater fishing
What a dork!

I Shall Never Return
1
Kazuna Uchida
Deux
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Any volunteers?
Over here, teach!
One girl and one boy
We're going to elect students to the homeroom committee...
...and organize our class trip
Now then...
I nominate Ritsuro Yoshinari
Kazuyoshi Iwasaki #1 in roll call
Elect me!
WHO IS THIS GUY?
HUH?!
I'm...
KA-CHAK

I heard they're going out!
CHATTER CHATTER
Moeko ...
I'll do it, if Ritsuro does!
What a hot couple!
CHATTER
Moeko ..
.. TRYING TO DO?
You should thank me, Yoshinari
WHAT'S THIS GUY ..
There'll be a meeting every day after school
Thanks
Sir
Lucky you

Moeko
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
WHAT'S HE PLANNING?!
We'll be spending every day together
Ritsuro
CLANG
RUSTLE
I don't care about Ken!
It'd be stupid to be jealous of him.
You know about Ken and me
You ...
So how do you feel now? Is it painful? Are you suffering?

I want you to see me with my hair cut short like this, Ritsuro
I want you to feel it when you talk to me!
To feel guilty!
SHOCK!
I suffered so much, blaming myself for what I did to you
And I want you to feel as guilty!

That's all
TAK
Trouble in paradise, Yoshinari?
HE WAS WATCHING THE WHOLE TIME?
Iwasaki—
What's your problem with me?
I was just saying hi—
—since you and I have a friend in common
HUH?

Ken Amafuji
...and I used to be close. But then he disappeared on me.
Where is he now? Is he the same as always? You're his best friend... right?
We'll talk when you're up to it. It looks like you've got problems of your own.
Iwasaki... you...
How MUCH DOES HE KNOW?!
WHAT...?!

I'm home
Hey. How did it go with Moeka?
Call!
We're in the same class again. Ironic, huh?
The laundry's really piling up.
KUSTLE
That sucks
Do you know a guy named Kazuyoshi Iwasaki?
I think he was in my second-year class. What about him?

Kazu? No way He's not that kind of guy
Nothing He was asking about you
Ha, I can't ask that
DID YOU SLEEP WITH HIM?
I wasn't in the mood today
How's the job search going?
"KAZU" HUH?
SOUNDS LIKE THEY WERE PRETTY CLOSE.
GRAB
Let's see here
Watch a movie with me? Movies can spice things up.
That actress isn't really my type.
The actor either.
Can't we watch something else? Maybe an action flick?

You bothered by Kazuyoshi?
As if!
SLIP
At least take off your tie and glasses.
Watching the video turned you on that much? That's kind of... stupid.
Ken...

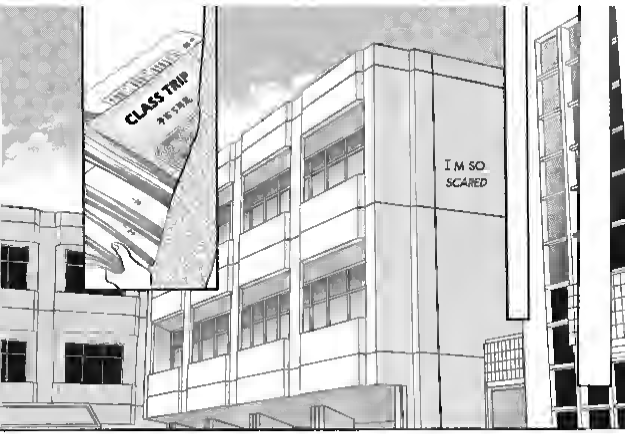
I hate that actress too
So I imagined she was you
You trying to make me a woman again?
Women don't have one of *these*

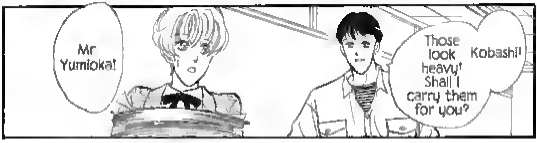
THE ONLY THING IN MY HEAD...
...IS YOUR NAME, REPEATING OVER AND OVER.
IT SCARES ME.
THE WAY I CAN'T BE AWAY FROM YOU NOW
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THIS DESIRE IS PURE ANYMORE.
Ken...
Ken...
THE FEELINGS ARE SO STRONG THAT IT SCARES ME

I FEEL LIKE I MIGHT REMEMBER THE WAY I FELT ONCE BEFORE.
AND THAT SCARES ME!
Damnit!
SENIOR CLASS 7
Mr. Yoshinari and Ms. Kobashi.
We're having a homeroom committee meeting now. I'm counting on you!
Yes, sir.
....
....

R... really?
Of course not, sir!
What's up? Did you two have a fight?
Let's go, Ritsuro!

Stop
Stop it!
Ritsuro?
HOW MUCH LONGER CAN WE KEEP LIVING LIKE THIS?
I'm scared
Of what?





Been putting the packets together?

SENIOR CLASS 7

So...
What makes a girl cut off all her hair like that?
Nothing in particular! I just wanted a new look!
Did you think it was over a breakup?!
TAP TAP
Sorry about that.
Any idea how a guy could dump his girlfriend for his best buddy?
SLIDE
K-CHK
I wish I was a guy
TH-THUMP
Kobashi ..?

S.. sir?
I'll leave the rest to you two!
M-Mr. Yoshinari! You finally showed up!
CLICK
TAP TAP
トン トン
Now it's just the two of us.
Here, let me help

Why do you like guys?
CLASS TRIP
May I ask something?
BLUSH
CLASS TRIP
K-CHK
CLASS TRIP

He's your "boyfriend," right?
MOEKO...
I... I don't hate women or anything
And I wouldn't go out with just *any* guy
But you want Ken, not me.
The stuff you couldn't do with me you can do with him, right?!
CLASS TRIP
.....
Yeah.

Let me go!
Moeko!
No!
Wait!
I shouldn't have asked!
Moeko!
SLAM
I'm sorry, Moeko!
I'm sorry!
Moeko, I'm so sorry!
PLIP

If it keeps up, I'll be ripped apart!
They repel each other like the same poles of two magnets!
I... I feel like I've got two hearts in one body!
You're crying before I do?
I know it's pathetic, but...

You're so old-fashioned. You need to lighten up
It's not like we were *engaged*
Why are you so worked up?
Don't
Moeko?

The feelings between us were hard to bear.
But I didn't want to just sit around wondering why it happened
I wanted revenge It was stupid but I did.
Moeko...
I'm sorry.
I won't ask you for anything more.
I'll be happy if you just take what I give you.
So...

I HAVE TO SAY GOODBYE...
SQUEEZE
Goodbye, my "boyfriend."
...BECAUSE I DID LOVE YOU.
GOODBYE, MY "GIRLFRIEND."

You two made up That's great
FLIP
You don't know anything about it!
TH-THUMP
What happened?
Ms. Kobashi

I was waiting for you Yoshinari.
It's OK.
Iwa-saki
So? Feel like talking yet?

THIS GUY...
Ken's mother got remarried and her new husband got transferred to Singapore
If you're lying I'll find out
WHAT DOES HE WANT TO SEE KEN FOR?
I'm not lying...
Right
What shall I make you do if it is a lie? Maybe make you take Ken's place?
I'd pay you.
Did you sleep with Ken?!
GRAB
Huh? Did you?!
CLANG

H-Hey, don't get huffy!
KEN
HONK
Were you doing that stuff before you even started living alone?
What about *you* Yoshinari?
You guessed about Ken and me, so you must be the same.
You look preppy but if you're with Ken, you're just another animal.
Why don't we animals just get along, huh?
I'M DIRTY!

I'm not like you!
You want him all for yourself?!
WHUMP
It's all going to ruin!
My feelings for you were always so pure!
Ritsuro?

I wasn't in the mood.
Did you look for a job?
Did you forget I said to take off your glasses and tie?
Is this love?
Or lust?
I just don't know anymore.
And that scares me.
Come in.

I Shall Never Return
1
Kazuna Uchida
Deux
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Act three

Ritsuro
...
I broke up with Maeko.
Really?

KEN
Really
Now

THUD
FLOP
Agh...
you're all mine.
SQUEEZE
KEN.
THWUMP
Ken—stop
Ngh...
KEN?!

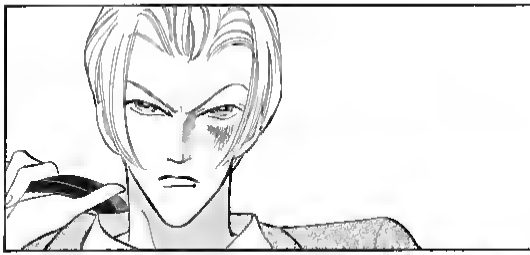
YOU'RE ALL MINE!
THUNK
Mm
Stop
BONK!
That hurts! Don't
Sto uhh...
WHUMP
TAINTED...
THONK
K Ken!

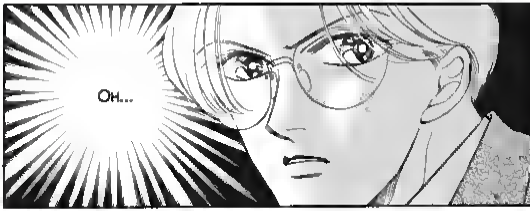
MY FEELINGS ARE TAINTED NOW
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
CHK
SQUEAK
Ritsuro?

—FOR MY POOR "BEST FRIEND" WHO HAD LOST HIS FAMILY—
AT FIRST IT WAS FRIENDSHIP
THEN IT WAS PITY—
KEN.
BUT
FLICK
I LEFT MY GIRLFRIEND FOR YOU—
—BECAUSE I ONLY WANTED TO BE WITH YOU.

I CAN'T KEEP GOING ON LIKE THIS

7 DAYS TO CLASS TRIP
So those are your room and seating arrangements for the trip.
SENIOR CLASS 7
Some parents have expressed worries about plane crashes and too much time away from school
As you may already know we're going to do something a little different for this year's school trip
CREAK
No complaining, Ms. Kobashi.
I was fine with southern Kyushu
I mean, Okinawa.
—but if all goes well, this year's trip to Okinawa could turn out to be a regular thing.
You're the guinea pigs.




OH...

Mr. Iwasaki!
YOSHIZAKI
IWASAKI
KANJYOSHI
SCREECH
キキーッ
Extended homeroom is always sixth period.
Mr. Iwasaki, do you know what period it is?
WIPE
What do you think you're doing?!

Ritsuro?
Let's all get along
WHAT IN THE HELL..
CLANG CLANG
..ARE YOU PLANNING?
CLANG
CLANG
IWASAKI!
HM?
RUSTLE
CLANG CLANG

I'm not gonna let you see Ken.
No Entry To Rooftop
You and what army?
I don't know where you get off being so high and mighty.
YOU LOOK PREPPY, BUT IF YOU'RE WITH KEN, YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER ANIMAL.
WHY DON'T WE ANIMALS JUST GET ALONG HUH?
Jeez You punch me and don't even apologize?
What's with the attitude?
Tell me what reason you have to see Ken!
Then what?

Yoshinari, how much do you know about Ken?
He won't keep up the goody-two-shoes act for long, you know.
Nothing
What's so funny?
HEH HEH HEH
GRRR
I know a side of him that you don't.
GRAB
You bastard!
He's got a taste for the wild side For devouring people
He really is an animal

HEH
Huh, Yoshinari?
You actually think it's love?!
WINCE
It's not...
...love?
We're the only ones who can lick each other's wounds.
He and I...
It's my *duty* to see Ken.

I'm gonna see him
HEH
GLARE
Wounds?

Wait. Ritsuro.
Moeko.
Are you on your way home?
About the group activity on the second evening
You mean, on the school trip?
Oh never mind it can wait
What is it?
Moeko?
No, really Never mind
GRIP
Oops!
ROOM ASSIGNMENTS
FLUTTER
FLUTTER
FLUTTER

Don't keep it bottled up inside.
Huh?
No, don't worry about it
Sorry it's my
If you're going through something you can talk to me.
MOEKO
Friends?
We're friends, right?

If you say so...
Thanks but I'm OK...
Don't worry
Friends, huh...?
Yeah.
SMILE
Uh... yeah!
See you tomorrow!

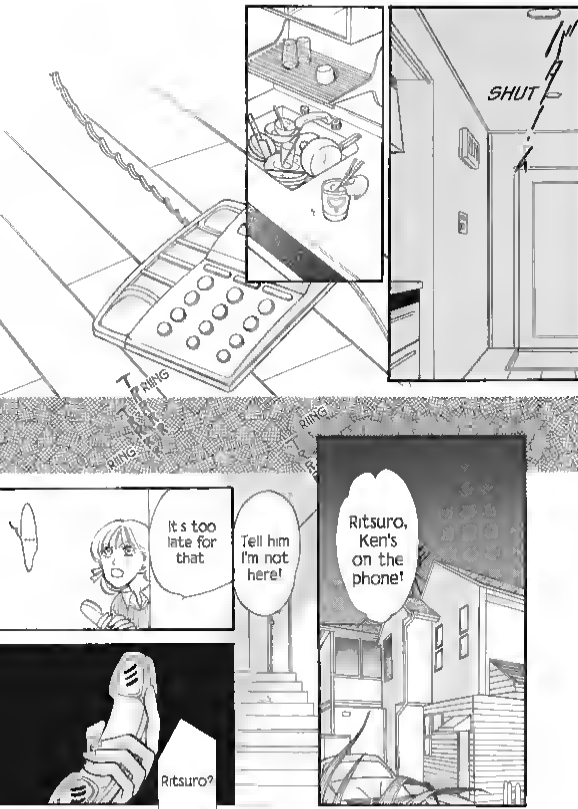
Hey! Stop spacing out!
Huh?
What do you think of this?
Hey, Moeko!
Loft
Don't worry Ritsuro probably just had things to do.
Michiru
So he's your type, huh Michiru?
He even helped buy the props!
He was the one who suggested karaoke for the talent show, right?
He has no friends!
You should've invited Mr Yumioka instead!

Compared to me, you've got better taste
WAVE WAVE
"Don't make an fool! Fall in to love with a teacher is a waste of time!"
Huh?
BLUSH
He'll go to a good college and get a good job
TAP TAP
Ritsuro's got good grades and he's serious.
Hm?
You'd better hold on to him!
Moeko?
B-DMP

The moving job, right? Sorry, they're overstaffed.
Did you decide?
GRIP
I...
The cleaners, too?
You? You think you could be a cleaner? I'd think that over if I were you
No...
He's looking at us!
Hey do you know him?

でも
But!
I didn't know girls still cut their hair to get over a broken heart.
A broken heart?
You cut your hair. It looks good.
A broken heart, Moeko?
You want your best friend all to yourself so you can do *whatever* to him!
How would *you* know?!
I know!
You're so greedy!

That's not love!
Moeko!
Moeko ...?!
Let's go, Michiru!
It's NOT?!
It's NOT... love?
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
Wait!


SHUT
RING
RING
RING
Ritsuro, Ken's on the phone!
Tell him I'm not here!
It's too late for that
Ritsuro?

No, that's OK
What's with you, Ritsuro?
I'll come check on you.
Today? Sorry, I've got a cold
It's just a cold I'll come see you when I'm better
No, that's not what I meant!
Tomorrow I'll come by tomorrow.
It was selfish of me. I shouldn't have done that without thinking about what *you* wanted.
What the hell happened? If it's about last night, I'm sorry.

Sorry.
Ritsu.
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
BEEP
SENIOR CLASS 7
You guys better start packing!
The trip's in two days.

Are you OK Kobashi?
What do you mean?
204
KEN AMAFUJI
CLICK
Hey
THE LOOK IN KEN'S EYES HURT ME.

I Shall Never Return
1
Kazuna Uchida
Deux
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Did you sleep with Kazuyoshi?
Did you...
IT PIERCED MY HEART
HE WAS SO CONFIDENT
Ritsuro you...
Did you sleep with Iwasaki?!
I asked you a question!
No.
THAT CAN'T BE TRUE.
I hate liars.

He was asking about us?
Then how'd he know you were selling yourself?! Why was he suspicious of you and me?
That's all! I swear!
Why are you being like that? He was just a kid in my class!
Just tell me, Ken!
Or did you just let him do it, huh?!
Why did you do it? Was it for money?!
FLOP

I told you, we broke up!
But she hasn't given up on you!
Well, what about you? What about Moeko?
So that's what this is about!
You
Ken...
You've been with her, right? I just haven't caught you!
Don't you trust me?
When?
I ran into her yesterday
Did you see her?

I could ask you the same thing.
I can guess what Kazuyoshi told you, but.
...really I didn't...
I DIDN'T...
HEH
Ritsuro?

It's funny...
...we're like a boy and girl.
Is it...
...some mistake of nature?
I'm going home now
I WANT TO BELIEVE YOU
I REALLY DO

CREAK
Ritsuro?
What is it?
How ?
Dammit! I forgot my glasses again.
How'd you find me?

Kazu-yoshi.
These are courtesy of a certain *someone*
Oh. I forgot.
You haven't changed at all.
Did you follow Ritsuro?
After one whole year that's all you can say?!
you should leave
Just like your mom huh? You're gonna ditch me like she left Dad!
HUH?

You haven't forgotten what happened, have you?
Ken don't you think it's been long enough?
WHAT DID HE SAY?
. are the only ones who can lick each other's wounds.
You were the one who said that we
!
GRRR
Get out of here!
Stop
Stop it!
SHOVE
!!

He's dead.
Kazuyoshi don't ever come here again
He died two months ago.
You're gonna change your tune *now*?
Huh, Ken?

What'd you do to Ken?! How far are you planning to–
So did you hear all that?
Go ahead. Hit me if you want.
You'll never understand how I feel, Yoshinari.
How it feels to be part of a murder
Mur der?

WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?
He hid for a year
Like when his mom deceived my father
What
JUST LIKE YOUR MOM, HUH?
THAT'S...
They were supposed to get married. Ken and I.
...would have been brothers
HEH
THAT'S...
Guess you didn't know about it
Huh. Yoshinari.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE...
I KNEW...
HE NEVER SAID A WORD
...YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE FOR ME.
Looks like...
...you never meant that much to him.
KEN...!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE!
Over here, Ken!
BOW
Club
WOW
Hey Bro You came

What's you rehashing all that for?
She'd even picked out the church, you know.
What I want to know is
That's cold Just like your mom
Stop calling me that. We're not related.
Is he really dead?
Huh Kazuyoshi?
He's dead all right. It came down to a question of whether his heart was still beating.
Considering the height he jumped from, it's a miracle he survived another 10 months

Idiot.
His family doesn't know why he did it You d just be adding insult to injury
We should apologize to his family
But Kazuyoshi
It s our little secret.
But.
We have to carry this guilt the rest of our lives.
I was wrestling with it alone the whole time you were gone
It's too late, Ken

You actually think you-know-who's changed you?
Get away from me, Kazuyoshi!
We have the same wounds.
Don't think I'm the same guy I used to be!
I'm through pretending to be brothers.
Ken?!
SPLASH

I KNEW IT COULDN'T LAST.
You weren't in school today
I was worried.
Don't forget the school trip is tomorrow.
We broke up like you wanted.
So why so sad?
DISTRICT 8 PARK
Ken?!

FRIENDS...?
HE WAS MY BEST FRIEND.
Can't you even tell your friends?
I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDERSTOOD HIM
...AND I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM!
HE NEEDED ME
What are "friends"? What is a "best friend"?
...AND I RESPONDED TO THAT

EVERYTHING I BELIEVED IN...
Ritsuro
WAS IT JUST LUST LIKE IWASAKI SAID?
What's love and what's friendship?
Can you tell me, Moeko?
WAS WHAT I DID WRONG?

Was I just confusing friendship for love?
Ritsu-ro...
And a superficial friendship at that?!
Ritsuro
Ritsuro!
Don't touch me! Go to hell!
Ritsu ro
Go share your secrets with Kazuyoshi!
Go and lick each other's wounds!
YOUR DIRTY WOUNDS!

ALL YOU DO IS TAKE, AND THAT'S DIRTY, KEN!
YOU'RE DIRTY!
Ritsuro, you're the only one for me.
WINCE
YOU'RE SO SELFISH!
Can you tell me *everything*? Not hide anything?
I can!
I'd spill my guts for you!

The story continues in *I Shall Never Return Volume 2...*

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BRING IT HOME ON DVD!

KEN AMAFUJI HAS LIVED A DARK LIFE. HE'S HAD TO FEND FOR HIMSELF AS LONG AS HE CAN REMEMBER. SELLING HIMSELF TO STRANGE MEN JUST TO PAY THE RENT. THE ONE RAY OF LIGHT IN HIS LIFE HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND RITSUROU YOSHIHARI. ALWAYS HAPPY, BRIGHT, AND UPBEAT, RITSUROU HAS ALWAYS BEEN EVERYTHING THAT KEN IS NOT.

..AND KEN LOVES HIM LIKE HE LOVES NO OTHER. RITSUROU HAS A GIRLFRIEND, MOEKO, AND STUDIES HARD, HOPING TO LIVE A SIMPLE, CONVENTIONAL LIFE. BUT THEN KEN LEARNS THAT RITSUROU HAS BEEN UNABLE TO BRING HIMSELF TO CONSUMMATE HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH MOEKO, AND HE FEELS A SPARK OF HOPE. KEN SEDUCES MOEKO HIMSELF TO GET CLOSER TO RITSUROU AND STARTS THE THREE OF THEM DOWN A PATH OF NO RETURN.

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This is the back of the book. Read from right to left.

◀ ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀ Turn over & enjoy! ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀

I Shall Never Return

1

I Shall Never Return • Volume 1

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Where Fantasy Becomes Obsession...